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UNCLAS BRATISLAVA 000909

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EU](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVAK PARTIES AGAINST TURKISH EU ACCESSION

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11. (SBU) Summary. Two parties from Slovakia's four-party ruling coalition have voiced strong reservations about setting a firm date for Turkey to begin EU accession talks. On September 30, Speaker of the Parliament Pavol Hrusovsky of the Christian-Democratic Movement (KDH) said he saw "many reasons not to start accession talks with Turkey." On October 1, Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda voiced the opinion of his Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU), saying Turkey is not ready for EU membership. During Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's recent visit to

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Slovakia, GOS members were non-committal regarding Turkey's efforts to start accession talks, but were not overtly negative. End summary.

12. (U) Dzurinda, in a press conference at SDKU headquarters, said the SDKU wished to begin a debate among Slovakia's political parties about future EU accession for Turkey. He made four points:

-- Turkey is not yet ready for EU membership.

-- SDKU has serious doubts about whether Turkey has met the criteria for beginning negotiations and about Turkey's ability to successfully complete the process. Completing the process would of course mean that Turkey would be a full-fledged member of the EU.

-- Turkey has made advancements in recent years towards fulfilling the political and economic criteria required for entry to the EU.

-- The key point; SDKU will support further talks between the EU and Turkey, as long as the result does not lead to an EU commitment to accept Turkey as a member.

13. (U) Dzurinda went on to list five factors on which SDKU based this policy.

-- The current state of economic and political affairs in Turkey.

-- The ability of the EU to absorb more members (particularly financially). SDKU gives priority to Bulgaria and Romania, then Croatia and other Baltic states, then eventually Ukraine.

--The fact that Turkey is a big and important neighbor of the European Union, and not only SDKU but all of Slovakia has an eminent interest in a democratic and secular Turkey.

-- A desire to support positive tendencies in Turkey in the past years in political, economic, and human rights areas.

-- The fact that talks between the EU and Turkey have been going on for a long time, long before Slovakia was a member. The SDKU takes into account the dialogue that has already taken place, and wants this work to continue.

Dzurinda said that as soon as the SDKU learns the results of the EU Commission's report on Turkey, it will begin a dialogue with all political parties to reach as wide a consensus as possible within Slovakia on the issue.

14. (SBU) In a September 30 press conference, Hrusovsky said that among KDH's main concerns about setting a date to start accession talks was Turkey's refusal to recognize Cyprus, an EU member state. He added that he could not imagine negotiation on EU membership could begin until this situation was resolved. Hrusovsky said he would like to see Slovakia join the initiative by "conservative" European countries that proposes a privileged partnership with the EU rather than full-fledged EU membership. He reportedly also made reference to the fact that Turkey is a Muslim country. Hrusovsky closed by saying that the EU has never stood before a more difficult task.

15. (SBU) Comment: During Mr. Armitage's September 14 visit, Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan of the SDKU and other GOS

officials gave little hint of the negative bias against Turkey's EU aspirations that have now come to light. Within two weeks, the Slovak cabinet should present its official report on the GOS's position towards setting a date to start EU accession talks with Turkey. Foreign Policy Advisor Milan Jezovica emphasized to emboffs that Dzurinda's statement was a party position, and not a government position. However, the KDH's and SDKU's statements thus far leave little doubt what stance the GOS will take.
THAYER

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